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# Europe Beyond East and West

## Introduction

Europe is *between* East and West in an obvious geographical sense: between the Asian continent, of which it forms a peninsula, and the Europeanised societies of the Americas<sup>1</sup>. Until recently, it was of course geopolitically partitioned between East and West, as the front line of, respectively, the Warsaw Pact and NATO. Berlin, itself partitioned, was both a Western metropolis and an Eastern capital, with American GIs, off duty but in uniform, strolling through the latter and the odd Soviet sentry in the former. The residues of the East/West partition of Europe are still with us, not least in Berlin itself, though they have again been overlaid, as they always used to be, by other geographical and social divisions. As Larry Ray and I put it in our recent book (Outhwaite and Ray, 2005), one can say that ‘we are all postcommunist now’, not in the sense of ideological demobilisation or what Habermas (1985) called ‘the exhaustion of utopian energies’, but in the sense that Europe as a whole, as well as the European Union, has been radically transformed by what happened in and around 1989 in the communist half of the continent. It now makes sense once again, as it did for a year or two after World War Two, to think of a political Europe which in principle includes the whole sub-continent, although East and West experienced radically different trajectories over the second half of the twentieth century.

Europe’s eastern border will remain an issue for the foreseeable future. At the time of writing, the question of Turkey’s membership of the EU is still not finally resolved. Even if we take that proleptically as achieved, along with the accession of the Western Balkan states of former Yugoslavia and Albania and of Ukraine and Belarus, there remains the open question of Russia and the rest of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Many of the latter states, if they are not unequivocally European, would certainly pass the ‘Turkish test’ as substantially secularised and westernised Moslem societies. Whereas the western end of Europe is clearly marked by the Atlantic Ocean, its eastern edge is not just imprecise, but fundamentally indeterminate, in the sense that any attempt to fix it conceptually or politically

generates paradoxes which undermine the attempt. As Liotta (2005: 69) puts it, 'In the broadest sense, the "new" map of Greater Europe includes Turkey, Ukraine, the Russian Federation, and perhaps even Christian Armenia and Georgia and Muslim Azerbaijan.' (See also Lavenex, 2004; Rumford, 2006a.)

Europe is however between east and west in a more interesting internal sense, with substantial populations in many parts of Europe identified with Asia in one way or another and/or with 'eastern' religions such as Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. This is of course true of North America or Australasia as well, but in Europe it is a much more prominent feature, with several prospective member-states of the EU predominantly Muslim by religion. Even excluding central Asia from consideration, we have Turkey, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania as prospective member-states with substantially Muslim populations.

To register these facts is to confront a Europe which is not so much between as beyond East and West (Delanty, 2006a; Wang Hui, 2005a, 2005b), just as much as hyper-modern Dubai, Singapore or Hong Kong. At the same time, however, the internal east-west divide remains an important structuring feature, not just of Europe as a whole but of many European states and even many European cities, whose smart western suburbs are upwind of the central and eastern quarters. The East/West 'wall in the head'<sup>2</sup> is not confined to Berlin, nor more substantial walls to Jerusalem. Most fundamentally, the East/West divide has been shaped by ideologies of European (and, within Europe, Western) superiority which continue to influence such concrete issues as EU enlargement negotiations. As Étienne Balibar (2004: 24-5) has suggested, 'we should resist the illusion of believing...that some national traditions are open, tolerant, and "universalist" by "nature" or on account of their "exceptionality", whereas others, still by virtue of their nature or historical specificity, are intolerant and "particularist"'. Balibar was referring to national traditions and to their attitudes to foreigners, but the point has a more general application. As Jan Nederveen Pieterse writes (2002: 141): 'A cultural analysis of Europe points toward traveling light, in the sense of leaving behind the heavy luggage of imperialism and colonialism, racism and chauvinism, nationalism and parochialism.'

## Europe in its Place

To think about Europe, then, at least the Europe of the last half-millennium, is to think, however sceptically and critically, about modernity, and this inflects the notion of the West. Since around half-way to two-thirds through the last millennium, Europe has come to see itself and portray itself to the rest of the world as 'western' in an evaluative sense, and its neighbours and its own eastern or southern regions, and parts of its populations, as less western or less than western. This is an approach appropriately described and rightly condemned as Eurocentric in relation to the rest of the world and western-centric or occidentocentric within Europe.<sup>3</sup> It is of course integrally linked to imperialism and to the processes, within Europe itself and its component states, of 'internal colonialism' (Hechter, 19).<sup>4</sup> As Edward Said (2003) put it in one of his last articles (Guardian 2.8.03),

Think of the line that starts with Napoleon, continues with the rise of oriental studies and the takeover of North Africa, and goes on in similar undertakings in Vietnam, in Egypt, in Palestine and, during the entire 20th century, in the struggle over oil and strategic control in the Gulf, in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and Afghanistan. Then think of the rise of anti-colonial nationalism, through the short period of liberal independence, the era of military coups, of insurgency, civil war, religious fanaticism, irrational struggle and uncompromising brutality against the latest bunch of 'natives'. Each of these phases and eras produces its own distorted knowledge of the other, each its own reductive images, its own disputatious polemics.

There are substantial disagreements about when a Eurocentric world-view becomes entrenched in Europe, to what extent it is counterbalanced by a more open and responsive, even admiring approach to the rest of the world, and to what extent it reflects genuine innovations and advances in Europe itself (Arnason, 2005; 2006a; 2006b; Delanty, 1995, 1996, 2006a, 2006b). Very briefly, one can distinguish between those who date the beginnings of European hegemony and a Europe-dominated world economy to around 1500 and those who would set the former much later and identify a Eurasian-African world economy at a much earlier date, when

Europe was still pretty much a backwater. The second view seems clearly right in taking a global economic perspective, in which the world economy simply develops another growth node around the eighteenth century as a result of the much longer dominance of regions further east.

Unlike earlier economistic theories of modernization, however, modernity theory gives equal prominence to political, military and ideological or cultural aspects, and here the picture becomes more complicated. However much one might want to qualify the traditional view that there was something special about the European combination of small states and an over-arching ideological framework of Christianity and, for much of the region, Roman Law, or the gradual separation of political and religious authority and, with the protestant Reformation, the subordination of religion to the emergent national states (Mann, 1986; 1993; Bayly, 2004), it is clear that the French Revolution, for example, rapidly became, and remains, a major world-historical event. And although André Gunder Frank (1998) may be right that European beliefs in their superiority emerge in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century rather than in the middle of the millennium, it was still the case that Europeans, to the extent that they were Christians, believed not only in the unique truth of their religion (which is natural enough) but also, less plausibly, in its radical distinctiveness from Judaism and Islam. Islamic rule, as in the Ottoman empire, was a good deal more tolerant of religious and cultural diversity than rule by Christians. Even today, when Christians have mostly abandoned their predilection for pogroms, the idea of an exclusively or predominantly Christian Europe continues to resonate in parts of the European Right.

Some contemporary writers argue that the term modernity is irrevocably contaminated by Eurocentrism; Gurminder K. Bhambra's path-breaking book Rethinking Modernity (2007) is perhaps the best guide to and expression of this view. I take the more complacent line that to replace 'western' or 'European' with a more abstract notion of modernity and a complementary, more concrete notion of plural or multiple modernities is a better, and even inescapable, way of thinking about these issues. (As I write the preceding sentence, Word suspiciously underlines the plural, but it is wrong to do so.) Modernity, to this way of thinking, is *contingently* European or western in its first incarnation, but Europe has not retained a monopoly on modernity

any more than Britain retained a monopoly on industrialisation. As Gerard Delanty (2004: 176) puts it,

Modernity...is necessarily global in outlook; while it first emerged in western Europe, it is not Western, American, or European, but is an expression of world culture, which increasingly frames the local.

As for multiple modernities, Shmuel Eisenstadt (200?: 201-2), who pioneered this way of thinking, writes that:

...the idea of multiple modernities presumes that the best way to understand the contemporary world – indeed to explain the history of modernity – is to see it as a story of continual constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programs and cultural patterns of modernity. At the same time one of the most important implications of the term ‘multiple modernities’ is that modernity and Westernization are not identical; Western patterns of modernity are not the only ‘authentic’ modernities, though they enjoy historical precedence and continue to be a basic reference point for others.<sup>5</sup>

Delanty and others have pointed out that there is a danger in proliferating modernities to excess. It makes perfect sense to talk about the differences between British and French culture, for example, but not between British and French modernity. On the other hand, one might want to say that East Asian or, say, Japanese modernity remains significantly different from European modernity. This is partly a matter of structural patterns, such as the form taken by industrialisation and industrial employment, but also by the political and cultural ways in which these are framed. As Göran Therborn (1995: 14), suggests, summarising one of the main themes of his brilliant book,

Europe has been characterized, more than other areas of modernity, by a structuration of tasks, means and rights in terms of class, defined by clusters of economic tasks, and sustained by clusters of means and rights attached to groupings of economic tasks.

Colin Crouch (1999, 2001) has written in similar terms of the importance of class in the European context. But there are also more long-lasting cultural differences of the kind emphasized by Eisenstadt which persist even when historical differences in class stratification and class politics between Europe and the rest of the world have evened out. In Therborn's formulation, 'The value patterns of European modernity are first of all those of Christian religion and its secularization, of the nation-state and citizenship, and of individualism and class' (Therborn, 1995: 272). It is at this level of historical differences in cultural traditions that theories of modernity can make a contribution, and it is also this level which counts in thinking about Europe in a cosmopolitan framework.

One way of framing this is in terms of the notion of a 'post-western' Europe (Delanty, 2003; 2006). Of the three principal civilisational constellations in Europe, those of Western Christendom and the Russian and Ottoman empires, the Western one has been dominant throughout the modern period, reinforced by twentieth century Atlanticism and a project of European integration which began in the West of the continent and initially roughly matched the contours of the Carolingian empire. Further east, the Western referent becomes by definition more attenuated, as does the European one for, in particular, Turkey. The Europe of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century remains of course 'Western' in the sense of modernity and to some extent geopolitical attachment, while its centre of gravity has shifted east within Europe itself. What however remains uncertain is whether, or how long, Europe's representation of itself will continue to be shaped by the east/west polarity. The salience of these polarities can change, as illustrated by the no longer 'wild' West of the US or the no longer backward South of Germany.

## East and West, then and now

This chapter is primarily concerned with contemporary Europe, but it is instructive to look at the way in which longstanding patterns, whether real or imagined, continue to shape perceptions of East/West differences. Stefan Auer, in his excellent book on Central European nationalism, rightly problematises the common differentiation

between 'eastern' and 'western' variants. A standard formulation is that by Anthony Smith (1997: 324):

The Western model of the nation tended to emphasize the centrality of a national territory or homeland, a common system of laws and the importance of a mass, civic culture binding the citizens together. The Eastern model, by contrast, was more preoccupied with ethnic descent and cultural ties.

Smith stresses that 'The contrast between these two concepts of the nation should not be overdrawn, as we find elements of both at various times in several nationalisms in both Eastern and Western Europe.' Liah Greenfeld, author of a influential book published in 1992, takes a similar line that despite such overlaps and mismatches (Greenfeld, 1995: 18) one can distinguish between 'Western, less Western and anti-Western nationalism in Europe and elsewhere' (Greenfeld, 1995: 22). Auer (2004, chapter 1) argues convincingly that such contortions are misleading, and reflect dubious dichotomies traced equally in relation to forms of transition (Vachudová and Snyder, 1997) and of political culture (Carpenter, 1997). The terms of the comparisons may vary, but in each case the contrasts simplify and over-interpret a more complex and unpredictable reality. The rapid transformation of Slovakia after 1998 from pariah to EU member state makes the point, whether or not one follows Auer's critical defence of what he calls liberal nationalism.<sup>6</sup> The east/west binary division was inescapable in the Cold War period, but it should be treated with caution in the postcommunist context.

It remains a fact, however, that the mid-twentieth-century east/west division of Europe cut very deep. From the point of view of equalising existing east/west divisions in Europe, it would of course have been better if the Red Army had liberated, and the Soviet Union colonised, Western rather than Eastern Europe. (Whether, as an East German philosopher once assured me, state socialism in the West would have been incomparably more impressive than in the East because of the West's material advantages, is another question.) As it was, Soviet domination held back development in many parts of the bloc, notably East Germany and Czechoslovakia, and directed it in dubious directions in much of the rest. 'Eastern' Europe, the Europe east of what Churchill aptly baptised as the Iron Curtain, was



largely cut off for forty years, not of course from Europe, but from the mainstream of European development. This began with the Soviet ban on what came to be called the 'satellites' accepting Marshall aid. Whether or not the offer was seriously meant, it was at least on the table, and Czechoslovakia, in particular, was keen to accept and had at the time the political freedom to do so (Judt, 2005: 92).

Having been forced to reject aid from the original Marshall Plan, communist Europe in the 1990s missed out on a widely expected and badly needed, but never even seriously considered, second Marshall Plan. The rational response of the West to its sudden deliverance from the threat of attack from the Warsaw Pact would surely have been a massive shift of resources from defence to aid, comparable with that in the late 1940s. As it was, aid from individual Western states and from the EU was extremely limited, patchy and slow to arrive. Only in Germany was there a really significant transfer of resources, amounting to three trillion dollars over the decade, and it here it took place in a context already sabotaged by the abrupt currency union of 1990 which, even if it was politically unavoidable, as Kohl seemed to believe, rendered East Germany an economic disaster area. Elsewhere in the bloc, a serious aid programme would undoubtedly have achieved far more, at far lower cost, than current EU programmes. To put it starkly, the four lost decades of communism in central and eastern Europe were followed by a further lost decade of postcommunist transition, when economic transformation was hampered by lack of resources, as well as, arguably, by the then fashionable neoliberal economic policies.

In retrospect it is surprising that this prodigious social dislocation produced so little violent disorder. Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union split up peacefully, and Yugoslavia bloodily, but the widely-expected break-up of the Russian Federation, with civil war as its likely accompaniment, did not take place, despite ongoing flash-points in the Caucasus and elsewhere (Pryce-Jones, 1995). There was unpleasant street violence against foreigners, Roma and others, and a general increase in crime, but most of the pain of transition was born by individuals. Suicide rates soared, especially for men, and in parts of the bloc, notably in Russia, life expectancy rates collapsed (Therborn, 1997: 376-7, Outhwaite and Ray, 2005: 50). At the other end of the prosperity gradient, in East Germany, people benefited as individuals, even if they lost their jobs, but the society was decimated (Spiegel, 200?). This German pattern,

which ironically recalls Engels' remark that capitalism improved individual conditions at the cost of the human species, has a wider application in postcommunist Europe.

East/West divisions in contemporary Europe can best be examined in relation to three periods: 1) the annus mirabilis of 1989/90, 2) the long transition decade that followed and which culminated in 3) the EU enlargement of 2004 and its aftermath.

#### 1) 1989

If 1789 was, as I suggested earlier, one of the defining events of the modern political imagination, it remains to be seen what place will be given to the anticommunist revolutions of 1989. A number of commentators have stressed the absence of really new ideas in the 1989, especially after the rapid eclipse of civil society movements like Solidarity in Poland or Civic Form in Czechoslovakia; Habermas (1990), for example, called it a 'catching-up' or 'rectifying' revolution: a return to democracy (and capitalism), and to the 'normal' path of post WWII European development. Perhaps the revolutionary period was just too fast and too peaceful to capture the world's imagination; by the end of 2001 many people in the west were giving similar prominence to an (admittedly spectacular) terrorist attack on the United States. Tocqueville (1971: 99) wrote in his *Recollections* of the 1848 revolution of the 'complete silence' regarding the former King. Within a few days he 'could not have been more out of the picture if he had been a member of the Merovingian dynasty'. Similarly, the former dictators and their associates were prominent only if and when they came to trial.

#### 2) Transition

It is tempting to define postcommunist transition out of existence, suggesting that it is either essentially over, as many in East Central Europe would argue is the case in the parts of their states which interest them, or not (yet) seriously begun, as jaundiced observers of points further East often say (Vachudová and Snyder, 1997). Either way, for this reductive view, the implications for the rest of Europe are seen as relatively limited and can be handled under the category of transitional arrangements, where 'transition', like 'convergence', now refers to the path to EU accession rather than the shift from totalitarian socialism to liberal capitalism. It is certainly true that

the world-historical significance of the transition, rightly stressed by analysts like Andrew Arato, hardly seems to be reflected in the observable phenomena. Everything, so to speak, was tossed up into the air, but much of it fell down again into relatively familiar structures and patterns. But as I suggested in the Introduction, it would be a mistake to play down the process in this way, as in the euphemistic language of transition invites.

The notion of transition is doubly problematic. It suggests a teleological movement from one state to another, driven by a technocratic and unpolitical ethos of 'There is No Alternative' and the famous dentistry metaphor: 'if you don't visit the dentist for forty years you can expect some extensive and painful treatment'. Second, the implication is that once the transition is over – a point which might be taken to coincide with, for example, EU accession, the postcommunist condition is essentially over, like the colonial history of the US. Although many citizens and political elites in the more fortunate parts of the postcommunist world would indeed take this view, it is probably wrong. The postcommunist condition is substantially shaped by the postcommunist state, in the sense of the state apparatus, and the postcommunist state, even in Germany, where it arrived ready-made, is a political structure of a particular kind. The philosopher and cultural theorist Boris Groys (2006) has brought this out very clearly. In a short but suggestive book, Groys (2006: 94) points out that the privatising state is an activist state, no less than the communist nationalising state: the establishment of capitalism is a political project. This left part of the region, at least for the transitional period, with 'capitalism without capitalists' (Eyal et al, 2000), and a larger and less fortunate part with 'capitalists without capitalism', in other words, compradors of privatisation oriented mainly to exporting their capital to more secure locations.

### 3) Enlargement

The EU Enlargement of 2004 was striking for the mismatch between the enormous importance of what happened in May 2004 and the restricted form in which it was reflected both before and after the event. On the one hand there was the sense of a momentous transition, in which the European integration process finally embraced almost the whole of the subcontinent, including a majority of the European states excluded for forty years not just from the European Community/Union but also from

the post-war democratisation process itself. As Étienne Balibar described the situation in 1991 (Balibar, 2004: 90), 'Following the disappearance of one of the two blocs, the struggle itself is vanishing, which in fact constitutes a great trial of truth: now or never is the moment for the dream to materialize, for Europe to rise up, renewed or revitalized. This is also the moment when the dream risks being smashed into pieces.' On the other hand, there was an essentially technical and administrative process of harmonisation and coordination. Hannah Arendt (19) spoke (of course in an entirely different context) of the banality of evil, and we might speak here of the banality or the banalisation of enlargement. As Sobrina Edwards (2005) notes, the EU has oscillated in its public pronouncements between a position that this was just another accession and a more dramatic vocabulary of historic reconciliation.

Alongside all this, there was a further element, the constitutional convention, contingently related to the impending enlargement in that it could (and perhaps should) have taken place well before 1989, but intrinsically linked in its mission to make a larger Union viable and in the fact that the new members were fully represented in its deliberations. Although the Convention failed to produce an acceptable constitution, in other respects it was quite an impressive deliberative assembly which may be remembered when more immediately successful ventures are forgotten (Norman 2005). It was also one in which Old and New Europe met on relatively egalitarian and open terms. As Fraser Cameron (2004: 152) notes, 'it was difficult to distinguish speakers coming from existing or future member states', though the research of Ruth Wodak and her collaborators suggests a rather more pessimistic assessment: see Krzyzhanowski, 2005; Oberhuber, 2005. The dominant impression of the current enlargement remains that of a bureaucratic process managed in a bureaucratic manner, and tinged with arrogance on the part of the existing members. Like, some would say, the European Union itself...

What did this amount to in East-West terms? The Visegrad core of the 2004 accession states could, as their intellectuals had since the 1980s, invoke the idea of central Europe. This had been an important ideological plank in their self-affirmation against a Soviet hegemon characterised as Asiatic, and now could now serve as a marker of their advanced place in the accession queue. In practice, the term more often used was East Central Europe or East and Central Europe (ECE). This had the advantage of accommodating Poland and the Baltic States, though it also obscured the

more dramatic fact that in a sense Central Europe had ceased to exist. As Hans-Heinrich Nolte (1997; 2003) has pointed out, the Iron Curtain sealed the fate of a central Europe already transformed by the loss of its Jewish and German populations – the former by persecution and genocide, the latter by voluntary or forced emigration westwards. Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland became for forty years the west of the east; EU accession has made them, for the moment, the east of the west (Nolte, 2003: 46).

One of the most prominent implications of this re-shaping of east and west of course concerns migration. With Western Europe, now even including the Irish Republic, becoming a region of immigration, the flows are essentially from the south and east to the north-west. Many EC/EU enlargements have raised issues of this kind, notably the accession of Greece in 1981, the various non-accessions of Turkey over the past decades and the first eastern enlargement of 2004, which provoked considerable excitement about possible floods of Polish plumbers. All this has the potential to ignite renewed anxieties around the EU's 'near abroad', which form part of the explanation for why 2004 came so late.

It is instructive to look back at some of the surveys conducted around the turn of the century, in which existing EU citizens warmly welcomed the idea of Swiss or Norwegian (and Maltese) accession but were more lukewarm or even negative about the ECE countries (CEC 2000) and emphatically negative in the case of Turkey. Political elites also often shared this view. For Jacques Attali, for example, writing in 1994 when he was still (?) President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, there was a stark choice between widening and deepening the European Union: 'with twenty or twenty-two members, it would be impossible to move towards the single currency or establish common economic, social, judicial and foreign policies' (Attali, 1997: 349). Instead, he favoured a 'Continental Union' of which the EU would be a member and, '...with Russia, one of the essential motors' (Attali, 1997: 354). Such attitudes partly explain the EU's remarkably slow response to 1989, which provoked considerable resentment in Poland (Blazyca, 2002: 206-7; 212) and elsewhere in the region. Melinda Kovács (2001) neatly describes this response as 'putting down and putting off'. A more cosmopolitan Union, one must conclude, would have been more responsive and understanding - not least since it had just emerged from a potentially lethal cold war. Beck and Grande (2004: 259) rightly point to a certain 'western European racism'. As Baldwin et al. write (1997: 168,

quoted in Ingham and Ingham 2002: 15): ‘Imagine how eager western Europe would have been in 1980 to pay ECU 18 billion a year in order to free central Europe from communism and remove Soviet troops from the region.’<sup>7</sup>

We should of course not forget the possibility of a very different scenario in which either the EU was even less welcoming to the east, or in which part or all of the East deliberately rejected full membership of the EU in favour of a looser attachment in the European Economic Area. On the latter question, however unlikely it may look at present, the prospect of an Eastern European Norway or Switzerland, deliberately rejecting the option of accession, should not be ruled out. More to the point, as Böröcz and Sarkar (2005: 158-9) emphasise, full membership has been and is to be preceded by a long transitional period of dependency on EU regulations. ‘For the entrants during the 2004 round of accessions (who will enjoy equal rights within the EU by 2011), this quasi-dependency status will have lasted for 18 years. For next-round members Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey – optimistically assuming only a five-year delay – it can be expected to be circa 23 years’. (On further impending accessions, see also, for example, Bechev and Andreev, 2005.)

If the ECE countries were treated for a decade somewhat like East Germans by their Western relatives, it is also true that their inhabitants tend for their part to have a more ‘traditional’ and positive (‘pre-postcolonial’) conception of Europe than Westerners. Very many western Europeans, for example, belong to states which have had substantial colonial empires, and although they react to this past in very different ways (compare the generally positive and even nostalgic image of empire in the UK with the tendency to embarrassed denial in the Netherlands) it has perhaps given a more cosmopolitan and multicultural angle to their thinking about Europe. Habermas (2004:51) emphasises this effect of the experience of colonial rule and decolonisation: ‘with the growing distantiation from imperial rule and colonial history the European powers have had the chance *to take up a reflexive distance to themselves*’.<sup>8</sup> In the East, as noted earlier, ‘Europe’ in general and ‘Central Europe’ in particular have operated in part as tokens in a political strategy of distancing from the ‘asiatic’ USSR, as in the East German Rudolf Bahro’s now largely forgotten *Alternative* (Bahro 1977). To put it bluntly, Easterners, even more than Westerners, often talk

about the European heritage in up-beat language which can provoke hostility or embarrassment in parts of the West and the rest of the world.

The boot is perhaps on the other foot if one turns to a related issue, that of ethnocentric prejudice. The somewhat higher levels recorded in the East of Europe than in the West have generated something of a moral panic, starting with skinhead riots in the East German port of Rostock in 1991?. Without wishing to belittle the unpleasant character of these manifestations, and the extremely serious levels of anti-Roma prejudice in particular, the pattern overall seems to be that such attitudes are driven by specific current crises rather than linked into nationalism and extreme-right ideology, as they have tended to be in the West (Hjerm 2003). Very crudely, one might say that there is an intra-European cosmopolitan multicultural tradition in Eastern and Central Europe, historically tied to local empires, including of course the trans-European Russian empire (Sakwa, 2006), where the West has a more extra-European one more oriented to the Atlantic and the rest of the world via the Western European world empires. Both traditions of course are counterposed by explicit racism in the West and ethnic prejudice in the East, but the possibility of their fusion is one of the more optimistic scenarios in play here.

What remains?

We are confronted, then, with a Europe in which East-West divisions corresponding to the Iron Curtain remain extremely salient. This is in part a matter of historical memory. It is still possible, for instance, for eastern public figures to be threatened by proof or rumours of past collaboration with the secret police, where their western counterparts have only financial or sexual skeletons in their cupboards. The older generations are shaped by different historical events: the 1968 of the Prague Spring and its extinction is different from the 1968 of western protest movements (Stockmann, 2005: 45); there is a fuller discussion of political generations in Germany in Blech, 1995 and Arzheimer, 2006. Such east-west divisions are however weakening in the face of countervailing forces. The first of these is of long standing – as long as the east-west division itself. It is that between north and south.

The north-south division is salient both in Europe as a whole and in a number of its component states – notably Germany, Italy and France. In all three it is historically more of an axis between a prosperous and advanced north-west and a

more backward south-east. In the German stereotype, as expressed in a traditional song, southerners are 'hard-drinking, work-shy but loyal to the (Catholic) church'. Here, of course, part of the North became the East, bordered by the South. In Italy, the most extreme political expression of northern prejudice is in the early propaganda of the Lega Nord, contrasting a Germanic North with an African South. Modernisation in the second half of the twentieth century substantially relativised this axis. Often the north-west lost out and became deindustrialised, while new technology thrived in the south, as in Germany, or in a number of provincial growth poles, as in France. In Italy, attempts to modernise the south were less successful, but not without effect.

A second trend which weakened the simple contrast between west (and north) and east (and south) is that, as in the French case, development became increasingly differentiated between high-tech cities and more backward Hinterlaender. This has become even more striking in postcommunist Europe, with certain towns in, for example, Russia, heavily promoting themselves as sites for foreign investment (McCann, 2004). Here, the European case illustrates broader processes of the growth of world cities whose reference groups become one another rather than their respective rural surroundings. Thirdly, there is a more general eastward shift of some European investment in search of low wage costs; in Scandinavia, the move has of course been southwards to lower-cost regions of Western Europe as well as eastwards. Something which is still unclear is how far processes of this kind will modify the traditional image of a Europe whose productive core and consumption high-spots are located in the 'golden banana' running from south-east England through northern France and Germany to northern Italy. The EU itself remains, of course, heavily skewed to the west, with all its main institutions located in the original six member states; only if one takes the axis running from Portugal to Finland does the Brussels/Luxemburg/Strasbourg/Frankfurt institutional cluster appear like a natural centre. This may of course not matter, as long as the Union overcomes its western bias and leaves behind the painful memories of a decade of relative neglect of the east, running into its grudging acceptance on western terms. The latter is of course a difficult area. Many of the aims of the strategy known as conditionality (Pridham) were laudable, such as strengthening the independence of the judiciary, reducing corruption and police brutality and so on. But the circumstances under



which it was done were uncomfortable, to say the least, and provoked resentments of a kind familiar from the history of German reunification.

It may be useful to take two more concrete cases cutting across east-west differences. Both are ambiguous and to some extent remain unpredictable. The first example is again that of Germany; the second is the longer-standing axis between state socialist Europe and Scandinavia. In Germany, of course, the internal borders were rapidly effaced, and 'western' forms extended to the whole country. A massive transformation of technical infrastructure (roads, railways, electricity and communication cables) left much of the east more modern than the west. And yet, nearly twenty years on, there remain substantial objective and subjective differences, the latter neatly captured by the expression of the 'Mauer im Kopf', the Wall in the head. A government report of 2004(?) traced a gloomy picture, where Chancellor Kohl at the time of reunification had predicted 'blooming landscapes'. The question whether 'we are *one people*' (Falter et al, 2006) remains moot.

My second example was brilliantly marked out by Therborn (1995). In a wide-ranging survey of 'European Modernity 1945-2000', he noted the similarities in certain respects between the northern and central parts of communist Europe and their Scandinavian neighbours. Not only were welfare state *structures* comparably prominent, as was no surprise to anyone, but more interestingly, *attitudes* to a number of cultural and life-style issues showed substantial similarities compared to the more 'traditional' parts of Europe. Despite the currently fashionable discussion of post-secularism, Europe remains what Therborn (1995: 274) called 'the continent of secularization' and within Europe this is particularly strong in the Nordic countries and in Eastern Europe, particularly the non-Catholic regions. This is not just an effect of communist atheist propaganda; Poland in the early 1990s also scored highest in Europe for belief in God, even above the USA, though elsewhere in the former communist bloc, belief was lower than anywhere in the West apart from Sweden. Taking a different issue, that of attitudes to parenting, Therborn's analysis, based on the World Values Survey, suggested not just a sharp cleavage between North-Central Europe and South-Western Europe, as one might expect, but also within Eastern Europe. Respondents were asked, first, whether obedience or independence should be

encouraged in children and, second, whether parents should sacrifice their interests to those of their children.

There are clearly two Europes, one more individualist than most of the world, and one not. But it is not the usual line-up. *Central Europe*, except Czechoslovakia and Poland but linking up with Bulgaria, *the Baltic and the North Atlantic areas* embrace child independence and are relatively restrained in demanding parental sacrifices. Denmark and West Germany and, on the eastern fringes, Latvia, Lithuania and Bulgaria have the strongest individualism...

The *Southwest of Europe*, from Belgium to Portugal, including the British Isles, has a distinctively collectivist cast of family values. Portugal, France and Northern Ireland, in that order, also have a marked preference for obedience over independence. (Therborn, 1995: 293).

Therborn's material derives of course from the beginning of the postcommunist 1990s, and it is therefore interesting to see how far these patterns have persisted. One particularly interesting area is that of attitudes to inequality. Survey evidence suggests a majority perception in east central Europe that there are 'strong' or 'very strong' conflicts between managers and workers and that income differentials are 'too great', and a relation between the perception of conflict and objective inequality as measured by Gini coefficient (Delhey, 2001: 203-5). Post-communist electorates remain more egalitarian in their attitudes than Western Europeans, to a degree more closely related than in the West to the actual levels of inequality in their societies (Delhey, 2001). The traditional expression of egalitarian attitudes, in Europe and to some extent elsewhere, has been social democratic politics, but the scissor effect in the post-communist countries of the local demise of socialist/communist political and economic policies and the general reorientation of social democracy into third way or 'new' politics has tended to restrict this development.

This returns us to questions of the interaction of long-term processes with more immediate events. Of the latter, the changing position of eastern European states in what has aptly been called a regatta towards EU accession is a particularly good example. It is not long since Slovakia was seen as a remote possibility for

accession in the foreseeable future; it is now a member. At the time of writing, the relative positions of Bulgaria and Romania remain shifting. The postcommunist region displays, in a particularly interesting way, some of the difficulties of causal analysis in history and the other social sciences, as I hope to show in future work.

I have concentrated here on the divisions within Europe between east and west, and on the halting and partial way in which it is moving beyond them. But Europe as a whole remains inevitably in an intermediate *location* between Asia and America; how far this corresponds to an explicitly adopted *position* remains unclear. Blech (1995) draws this distinction between *Mittellage* and *Mittelstellung* in relation to Germany, but it can be extended to Europe as a whole. In the short term, the Atlantic has grown a lot wider as a result of the adventurist power politics of President Bush II, but under future presidents it will no doubt narrow again somewhat, unless the US generates even more extreme regimes. For the moment, and despite this period of *froideur* (see Torpey, 2004), the EU and its close associates remains clearly part of what Martin Shaw (2000) has boldly called the global state: an emergent level of state power with its roots in North America, Europe, Australasia, Japan and other parts of Asia. This is of course ‘western’ only in the residual sense that it builds on the Atlantic Pact of the second half of the twentieth century and US hegemony over Japan.<sup>9</sup> The EU’s internal configuration, in the sense of both its widening to new members and its deepening (or not) of the degree of integration, will of course affect its positioning in these respects, though perhaps not dramatically. The big enlargement of 2004 has made relatively little difference to EU foreign policy, so far as it exists, despite US Defense Secretary Rumsfeld’s crude attempt in 2003 to drive a wedge between ‘old’ and ‘new’ Europe. (Some ‘new’ elites followed the Anglo-Spanish line in supporting the attack on Iraq, but European *populations* were generally hostile, even in a somewhat ‘Finlandized’ United Kingdom.) More important, I think, is the need for the EU to develop itself as a democratic polity, against an unpromising background of neonationalism, ‘Euroscpticism’ and a slide towards what Crouch (2004) and others have aptly called ‘postdemocracy’.<sup>10</sup> And the question remains whether a European Union which has become post-western in the trivial sense that it is no longer composed of Western and Central Europe (plus Greece) will also become post-western in a more interesting sense of multicultural cosmopolitanism. It is hard to predict the likely place of Europe at the end of this century, but I am inclined to

follow Therborn's cautious prediction that it might well look like a macrocosm of Scandinavia: 'a nice, decent periphery of the world, with little power but some good ideas' (Therborn, 1997: 382).

## **Conclusion**

What follows from all this for the practice of European Studies? First, we should note that, like other forms of area studies, it must surely be interdisciplinary, intertemporal, in the sense of combining historical and contemporary concerns, and also geohistorical, locating European transformations in a broader context. All this could of course be said of any other domain of area studies, but it takes on a particular importance in relation to Europe because of the historical conjuncture, in the later part of the last millennium, of European hegemony, modernity and imperialism. Secondly, these considerations determine the kind of social science of use to European Studies. Most obviously, again, this is a Schengen space of border-free travel by social scientists who should not be required, and will most often not want, to display any disciplinary attachments they may have. Again however there is a specificity of the European situation: the peculiar form of the emergent European polity means that the relations between political, economic, cultural and other social processes are particularly fluid. Asking, for instance, whether there is something like a European society involves reference both to the history of Europe and its component national states and to the emergence of Europe-wide forms of interaction related specifically to the EU as a political form. It therefore poses, in a particularly sharp light, broader issues about the relation between the social and the political which have shaped much recent social theory.

There used to be a fairly simple notion, in both Marxist and non-Marxist sociology, that there were things called societies or social formations, within which there were had come to be things called states. Some people regretted the emergence of states (Clastres, 1973?) or expected them to wither away (Marxism); for others they were a permanent fixture, albeit secondary to broader social processes. Three things have happened to this simple model. Theda Skocpol and others powerfully restated the empirical and historical importance of the state apparatus, under the slogan of 'Bringing the State Back In'. Drawing on the work of Max Weber and Otto Hintze,

and her own analysis of state collapse in the French, Russian, and Chinese revolutions, Skocpol's approach stimulated and legitimated a certain shift of emphasis from 'society-centred' to 'state-centred' explanations. Secondly, in social and political theory there was a parallel reaffirmation of the importance of political processes in the creation or 'institution' of societies, marked in very different ways by the work of Hannah Arendt and Cornelius Castoriadis. Putting the same issue in historical terms, Peter Wagner (2001) has traced the rise and fall of the concept of society and shown how sociology can be seen as offering a certain set of answers to questions of political philosophy, rather than transcending or relativising them, as it had once claimed to do. Finally, globalisation can be seen to have undermined or at least reconfigured the territorial state or society. As the editors of a recent volume write in their introduction, European integration is a test case for postnational conceptions of the state and an opportunity to extend our conceptions and theories to keep up with what is happening (Katenhausen and Lamping, 2003: 9).

The suggestions above may seem a rather predictable plea for the social scientific equivalent of motherhood and apple pie, but their context is the current malaise, as I see it, of much work in European Studies, polarized between slender if often stimulating essays on the one hand, and the 'normal science' of European integration studies on the other, dominated by specialists in politics and international relations, plus a few of the more interesting economists and lawyers. But Europe, like the particular case of its postcommunist 'transition', is too important to be left to specialists, or to over-professionalized social scientists who draw a sharp separation between social, political and cultural processes. A further handicap, persistent but temporary, is the tendency to discuss 'Western' and 'Eastern' Europe separately. This is partly a hangover from the availability of statistical sources, which is gradually being rectified. Comparisons are increasingly being framed in terms of the US, Japan and the Eurozone (which of course will gradually be extended to most if not all of the EU).

The good news is that in the past years there has been an explosion of theoretical perspectives which can contribute to the sort of developments for which I have argued the need. First, the revival of historical sociology (Smith, 200?; Delanty and Isin, 2003) and the rapprochement between the institutionally separated disciplines of

sociology and international relations. Second, the emergence of postcolonial theory and the foregrounding of the imperial relationship, both in its heyday and, by extension, in the expansion of the EU as a quasi-imperial polity. This has given rise to an impressive body of critical writing on contemporary Europe; see, for example, Bhabra, 2007 and the work of Etienne Balibar (2004, 2006) whose reflections on the internalisation of European borders in discriminatory practices directed at different categories of European residents are highly relevant to the issues discussed here. Third, the related trend towards self-consciously cosmopolitan forms of theory (Beck and Grande, 2005; Delanty, 2005; Delanty and Rumford, 2005; Rumford, 2006; Wagner, 2005), drawing both on the internationalisation process previously mentioned and on political movements oriented to cosmopolitan democracy in Europe and elsewhere. These three clusters of theory also bridge the gap between empirical and normative analysis, in a fusion of interdisciplinary and interterritorial cosmopolitanism. Together, they are beginning to provide an adequate social and political theory for and of contemporary Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> Somewhat Eurocentrically referred to by Braudel (1963; 1987: 338) as ‘les Europe d’Amérique qui en découlent directement’.

<sup>2</sup> The expression was invented by Peter Schneider in 1982, in his classic novel *Der Mauerspringer*, in which he correctly predicted that it would take longer to demolish than the visible wall (Schneider, 1982: 117; see also Neller, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that the term ‘occidentalism’ has an entirely different meaning. It is modelled on Said’s concept of orientalism and has been used to refer to similar attitudes of suspicion and contempt, this time directed at the ‘west’ (see Carrier, 1995; Buruma and Margalit, 2004, Delanty, 2006b: 268).

<sup>4</sup> Russia’s land empire was of course a classic case of European ‘internal colonialism’, the securing of control over peripheries. The Soviet Union also presided over the last quasi-imperial structure in Europe, with the so-called ‘Brezhnev doctrine’ of the limited sovereignty of Warsaw Pact states. This differed from the ‘normal’ imperial relation in that here it was the hegemonic power which supplied its more developed client states with cheap energy and raw materials in exchange for relatively advanced consumer goods.

<sup>5</sup> A shift of this kind this seems to have been important, for example, for ‘Latin American’ intellectuals. ‘...the concern with the “West” fascinated ‘Latin’ American intellectuals for a long time. Only slowly did modernity become the focus of inquiry...’ (Dominguez, 2005: 391). Dominguez goes on to outline the way in which an analysis in terms of modernity gradually emancipated itself from an excessively abstract and (in either direction) value-loaded formulation.

<sup>6</sup> For a related line of argument, made with special reference to the Spanish context, see Pollack, 2007

<sup>7</sup> This figure was a current estimate of the likely cost of enlargement; the European Currency Unit (ECU) is of course the forerunner of the euro. See also Outhwaite 2006.

<sup>8</sup> In a much more critical approach to this question, Böröcz and Sarkar (2005) see the EU as in some ways a continuation of Western European colonialism in another context.

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<sup>9</sup> Kees van der Pijl (2006a, 2006b) sets the EU firmly in the context of his longstanding analysis of the Atlantic ruling class (van der Pijl, 1984).

<sup>10</sup> See also Wagner, 2007. On the need for (Habermas, 2004: 69-70) and the existence of elements of *deliberative* democracy in the EU, see Eriksen and Fossum 2000.